

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) A ~~An~~ automatic analyzer comprising:

a reagent bottle containing a liquid reagent and having an opening through which the reagent is sampled out of said reagent bottle, said opening being closed by a seal to shield off the reagent from an external atmosphere;

a reagent sampling arm, having a nozzle, for sampling the liquid reagent in said reagent bottle to the outside through said opening;

a reaction cell in which a sample is mixed with the reagent sampled by said reagent sampling arm; and

measuring means for measuring reaction between the sample and the reagent,

said automatic analyzer further comprising:

~~a seal piercing tool capable of being fitted over a nozzle of said reagent sampling arm to pierce the seal of said reagent bottle~~ for piercing the seal of said reagent bottle, said seal piercing tool having a fitting portion to be fitted to said nozzle of said reagent sampling arm;

~~a stationary container for accommodating~~ containing said seal piercing tool ~~when not used;~~ and

reagent sampling means having a moving mechanism for moving said reagent sampling arm, said reagent sampling means controlling said moving

mechanism for fitting said seal piercing tool contained in said stationary container to said nozzle of said reagent sampling arm, withdrawing said seal piercing tool fitted to said nozzle from said stationary container, and piercing said seal of said reagent bottle, with said seal piercing tool fitted to said nozzle, a mechanism for taking said seal piercing tool out of said container and fitting said seal piercing tool to said reagent sampling arm before the start of piercing the seal of said reagent bottle, and for returning said seal piercing tool to said stationary container after the end of the seal piercing.

2. (currently amended) An automatic analyzer according to Claim 1, ~~further comprising a wherein said moving mechanism is controlled~~ for fitting said seal piercing tool over the nozzle of said reagent sampling arm by inserting the nozzle into said seal piercing tool ~~accommodated contained~~ in said stationary container from above when said seal piercing tool is to be fitted, and for removing said seal piercing tool from the nozzle of said reagent sampling arm by inserting said reagent sampling arm, including said seal piercing tool fitted over the nozzle, into said stationary container when said seal piercing tool is to be removed.

3. (previously presented) An automatic analyzer according to Claim 1, wherein said seal piercing tool includes a lockable lever to prevent slipping-off of said seal piercing tool from said reagent sampling arm.

4. (currently amended) An automatic analyzer according to Claim 1, further comprising:

a rotatable disk on which a plurality of reagent bottles are arranged along a circumference of said disk; [[and]]

a wherein said moving mechanism is controlled for moving said reagent sampling arm, including said seal piercing tool fitted over the nozzle, to a reagent sampling position, descending said reagent sampling arm to pierce the seal of a first reagent bottle, and then repeating the operation of piercing the seal of a next reagent bottle after rotating said disk.

5. (currently amended) A An automatic analyzer ~~comprising~~ according to claim 1:

~~a reagent bottle containing a liquid reagent and having an opening through which the reagent is sampled out of said reagent bottle, said opening being closed by a seal to shield off the reagent from an external atmosphere;~~

~~— a reagent sampling arm for sampling the liquid reagent in said reagent bottle to the outside through said opening;~~

~~— a reaction cell in which a sample is mixed with the reagent sampled by said reagent sampling arm; and~~

~~— measuring means for measuring reaction between the sample and the reagent;~~

~~— said automatic analyzer further comprising:~~

~~— a seal piercing tool capable of being fitted over a nozzle of said reagent sampling arm to pierce the seal of said reagent bottle;~~

~~— a stationary container for accommodating said seal piercing tool when not used;~~

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~~— a mechanism for taking said seal piercing tool out of said container and fitting said seal piercing tool to said reagent sampling arm before the start of piercing the seal of said reagent bottle, and for returning said seal piercing tool to said container after the end of the seal piercing; and~~

a reagent sampling arm wherein said moving mechanism is controlled for moving said reagent sampling arm on a straight line path along which one or more openings of one or more reagent bottles, said stationary container, and a reagent dispensing position to said reaction cell are arranged.

6. (currently amended) An automatic analyzer according to Claim 5, further comprising a wherein said moving mechanism is controlled for fitting said seal piercing tool over the nozzle of said reagent sampling arm by inserting the nozzle into said seal piercing tool ~~accommodated~~ contained in said stationary container from above when said seal piercing tool is to be fitted, and for removing said seal piercing tool from the nozzle of said reagent sampling arm by inserting said reagent sampling arm, including said seal piercing tool fitted over the nozzle, into said stationary container when said seal piercing tool is to be removed,

said moving mechanism functioning to couple and decouple said seal piercing tool and said reagent sampling arm with with a combination of movement of said seal piercing tool along said straight line path and vertical movement thereof.

7. (canceled)

8. (previously presented) An automatic analyzer according to Claim 1, wherein said seal piercing tool has a slidable guide, said reagent bottle has a guide for guiding said seal piercing tool, and said seal piercing tool and said reagent bottle are aligned with each other through engagement between both the guides in a seal piercing operation.